With so many choices, both in hardware and technique, there's no wonder they call it the 'dark art'…

LD Systems
Adam Hall - 07785 110492

The LDLAX1002D (RRP £98.42) boasts a total of ten inputs via two microphone and four stereo line inputs. It is designed with high-quality microphone amps for maximum dynamics and minimum feedback, as well as a three-band tone control, plus switchable low-cut filter in the microphone channels. The integrated effects engine comes with 100 presets, including a number of reverb, delay and multi-effects. Meanwhile, an external effects device can also be connected via an Aux channel.
For even more flexibility, the LDLAX1202D (RRP £115.53) provides 12 inputs, including four microphone and four stereo line inputs.

Studiomaster
01908 281072

The all-new Horizon 2012 (RRP £1,299) is the latest in Studiomaster's range of mixing consoles. Packing 2,000 watts for PA or stage monitoring duties, the console is aimed at providing a powerful, yet compact solution for modern musicians and engineers. Featuring a new mic pre-amp design, it also uses an optical compressor on input channels, Studiomaster's three-band EQ with mid sweep, and four auxiliary sends to feed the onboard effects and external monitoring systems. Other features include twin DSP effects processors, a USB 2.0 interface, and on-board stereo two-way crossover when adding additional amplifiers and speakers.
Also designed for those in need of a compact, professional quality mixer is the C3X (RRP), which houses 12 inputs and a custom DSP effects processor, along with four balanced combination XLR and Jack inputs with three-band EQ. There is also the Studiomaster C2 series RRP from £69), which comprises four models with either four (two mic/two stereo) or six channels (four mic/two stereo) with or without USB connectivity.

Mackie
Polar Audio – 01444 258258

Mackie's DL1608 (RRP £999) aims to redefine live mixing by combining the power of a full-featured digital mixer with the mobility of an iPad. With 16 boutique-quality Onyx mic preamps and 24bit Cirrus Logic AD/DA converters, the mixer is engineered to offer optimised sound quality. Wired to wireless iPad control enables users to mix from anywhere in the venue, providing the freedom to control not only

the mix, but also plug-ins, such as EQ, dynamics, effects and more. The DL1608 also supports up to ten iPad devices.

Meanwhile, the eight-channel Mackie DL806 (RRP £775) is designed to bring the power of digital mixing and the freedom of wireless control together in a package that is ideal for smaller applications and venues. The mixer's wireless control means users can mix from anywhere using up to ten iPad, iPhone or iPod touch devices.

The DL806 hardware features eight Onyx mic preamps and 24-bit Cirrus Logic AD/DA converters, along with a host of powerful plug-ins, such as EQ, dynamics, effects and GEQ.

Allen & Heath
Audio-Technica – 0113 277 1441

The Qu-16 is a compact digital mixer with a professional feature set and an entry-level price tag, packaged in a 19" rack size. Inheriting technology from the GLD and iLive digital mixing systems, Qu-16 features total recall of settings (including 17 motorised faders and digitally controlled preamps), an intuitive touchscreen, Qu-Drive integrated multi-track recorder, dSNAKE for remote I/O and personal monitoring, multi-channel USB streaming to Mac, Qu-Pad control app, and iLive's FX library to deliver class-leading audio quality.

Allen & Heath also offers the ZED60-14FX; a compact analogue mixer that is ideal for small bands and venues. The ZED60-14FX is a companion to the ZED60-10FX launched earlier this year, employing the same 60mm faders but with the addition of an extra four mono/mic channels. Two of the eight mono channels have high impedance jack inputs that can take a normal line level or a low level input from a guitar pickup, meaning guitars can be plugged straight into the mixer without the need for DI boxes. Furthermore, two stereo inputs are provided for MP3/CD players or keyboards, while there is a configurable USB audio in/out for stereo recording, professional XLR main stereo outputs, a flexible monitoring section with headphone and speaker feed outputs, and 16 digital effects.

Dynacord
Bosch 0800 1695 739

The Dynacord CMS 600-3 (RRP £839.30) mixer id designed to fit into a variety of applications, whether they be live performance, home recording studios or fixed installations. Featuring electronically balanced XLR mic inputs, a nine-band stereo equaliser in the master section, and switchable low-cut filters on the first four channels, the CMS 600-3 also comes with six mono and two stereo analogue inputs, along with two stereo digital inputs via USB. Each channel boasts three sends, as well as a Balance/Pan control, a Mute and PFL switch, and a volume fader with Peak and Signal display.

There are also two separately editable effects units with 2 x 100 factory presets and 2 x 20 user presets. The effects are switchable remotely, while a contrast-rich OLED display allows user-friendly operation.

The CMS 600-3 is also available in a powered version – the PowerMate 600-3 (RRP £1,253) - with 2 x 1.000 watts RMS / four ohms.

Monacor
01908 217100

Monacor's MMX-1282USB ten-channel mixer comes with 12 inputs, a DSP effects unit

and USB interface, allowing the user to simply plug in and get mixing. The mixer offers eight mono input channels, which each come with gain control, a three-way equaliser and two stereo input channels with three-way equaliser and balance control.

Elsewhere, the DSP effects unit offers 100 different effects, including reverb, chorus, delay, flanger and pitch-shifter. It also boasts a control room function, as well as inserts for the mono input channels and master channels. Users can also benefit from tape record/play connections, +48V phantom power, which can be switched centrally, and connection for gooseneck light GNL-204 or GNL-205.

The Monacor MMX-1282USB mixer retails at £265.22.

Roland
01792 702701

The Roland M-200i is a compact 32 channel professional digital mixing console that is designed to offer the flexibility and mobility of comprehensive iPad control. The fully functional iPad application enables remote control of all the key features of the M-200i, including pre-amp control, pan, high pass filters and PEQ and GEQ control. It also includes the ability to store and recall scenes, adjust compressors and gates, sends on faders and effect editing.

The key benefit of the remote control application is that it allows users to control the mix from any location in the venue (within the wireless network), meaning they can adjust the levels from different points. Users can create the wireless network by plugging a router into the LAN port on the M-200i or by plugging the Roland Wireless Connect adapter (WNA1100-RL) into a USB port. Alternatively, you can use the multi-pin cable to connect the iPad to the M-200i.

Elsewhere, the M-200i features a 32-channel architecture with 17 motorised faders, eight AUX, four Matrix, eight DCA's and 24 inputs and 14 outputs on the console itself (expandable up to 64x54 via the REAC port and the Roland Digital Snake technology). The M-200i can also mix in audio sources from a USB key inserted in the USB port.

Wharfedale Pro
IAG – 01480 447707

While it may be a brand name associated with loudspeakers, Wharfedale Pro also offer a wide range of mixers - starting with its Connect series of mini mixers and the option of USB connectivity for £49 (Connect 502USB). The Connect 1202FX is an ideal solution for a small band looking for four mic inputs with FX and a budget of around RRP £100.

The company's biggest seller in Europe is the SL824USB, which comes with eight mic inputs, FX, bi directional USB and is even supplied with a rack mount kit, all for RRP £269.

Wharfedale Pro also offers a range of lightweight, powered box mixers, including the PMX500, which weighs in at just 4.5kg, as well as the brand new Force 12, which uses the company's 2 x 500W RMS four ohm power module. The mixer comes with eight mic

inputs, ten line level inputs, as well as USB, FX and local and global EQ. Weighing in at less that 14KG, the Force 12 is available for RRP £349.

Stagg
EMD – 01293 868612

Stagg's range of compact mixers is designed for use in any small venue and rehearsal set-up. The SMIX 4M2S UD (RRP £214) features four mono jack/XLR inputs, two stereo jack inputs, +48v phantom power for condenser microphones, built in digital FX processor, auxiliary input and output, as well as a built in USB interface for MP3 playback.

Aimed at providing a compact and cost-effective solution for small venue and rehearsal room applications, the SMIX 4M2S UD is also the subject of some special trade offers, which are available to Stagg dealers.

Peavey
01536 461234

Peavey's PV Series of mixers come with the firm's exclusive reference-quality microphone preamps and feature a THD (total harmonic distortion) of just 0.0007 per cent. Suitable for use in project studios, live and programme-music mixing situations, the PV Series mixers include Tape to Control Room and Tape to Mix assigns, allowing the operator to monitor an external stereo signal without using mixer channels. Additionally, the mixers' Control Room output sends a stereo master output signal to an external source for monitoring. Mixers are available in PV20 (18 channels), PV14 (10 channels), PV10 (8 channels), PV8 (6 channels) and PV6 (4 channels); also available in USB.

Peavey's newest range of powered mixers, the XR series, comprises the XR 1220 console and rack-mountable XR 1212, featuring patented Peavey technologies and extensive digital signal processing capabilities. Designed for versatility in live-performance and sound-reinforcement applications, the XR 1220 and XR 1212 feature dual 600-watt power amplifiers that can be summed to the main output or independently power mains and monitors at 600 watts each. A master section with built-in patented Feedback Ferret digital feedback elimination and a digital effects section is also included.

Elsewhere, Peavey FX Series mixers feature exclusive technologies with Silencer mic preamps, two digital effects processors, plus built-in MP3 compression. They also feature dual USB ports and are available in 16 FX (16 channels), 24 FX (24 channels) and 32 FX (32 channels).

Soundcraft
Sound Technology – 01462 480000

Soundcraft's Si Expression digital console range is available in three frame sizes - Si Expression 1 (RRP £2299), 2 (RRP £2799) and 3 (RRP £3399) - offering 16, 24 and 32

fader and mic inputs respectively. All three are capable of mixing up to 66 inputs by connecting any Soundcraft stagebox, including the new Mini Stagebox, or by connecting additional inputs over MADI.

The mixer is loaded with industry standard processing from Harman siblings BSS, dbx, Lexicon and Studer, as well as a variety of professional features, such as a colour touchscreen and Soundcraft FaderGlow, adopted from Soundcraft's Vi Series large format flagship consoles.

A DSP engine provides four-band parametric EQ, delays, gates and compressors on every input, parametric and 30-band graphic EQ, compressors and delays on all outputs, as well as four Lexicon stereo effects devices, all capable of being utilised at the same time. Additionally, Soundcraft ViSi Remote facilitates remote control of the console from an iPad.

A range of option cards are also available, including the new USB and FireWire Recording Card, and the BLU Link card, which enables connection to the dbx PMC16 Personal Monitoring System.

The Mini Stagebox 16 is available for RRP £999, while the Mini Stagebox 32 is available for RRP £1,999.

Samson
Korg – 01908 304601

Expanding on its MDR and XML Series mixers, Samson has since produced the L series of professional mixing consoles. These mixers are built for use in smaller venues and more modest applications, yet are still aimed at providing the comprehensive, professional features of a large console. Suitable for installed or portable applications, the L Series provides a minimum of eight mono mic/line channels with studio-quality microphone preamps and three-band swept mid EQ. In addition, the consoles all feature two stereo line channels with mic preamps and four-band EQ, along with three aux sends, plus an EFX send.